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Jefferson Awards honor 3 extraordinary unsung heroes

Winners: Lorne Adrain, Providence; Frank Forte, Warwick, & Steve Bruno, Hope

Providence (April 13, 2010) – United Way of Rhode Island (UWRI) and NBC10 announced today the three local winners of the 2010 R.I. Jefferson Awards for volunteer service.

All of the winners have gone above and beyond the call of duty to bring about long-term systemic change in the R.I. community. They were picked by a panel of six independent judges who chose them based on their outstanding personal acts and community impact.

The winners include Lorne Adrain, a Providence-based insurance advisor who has devoted his life to volunteering and is the founder of National Neighborhood Day; Steve Bruno, an electrician from Hope, R.I., whose personal battle with kidney disease inspired him to lead the charge in the field of organ donation; and Frank Forte, a 62-year-old from Warwick, who despite health ailments continues to work overtime as a Court Appointed Special Advocate.

“This is United Way’s first time partnering with NBC10 on these important awards that every year all over the nation honors thousands of volunteers, who work quietly every day to make a difference,” said Anthony Maione, president and CEO of UWRI. “We are honoring three stand-out people who our judges picked from an exemplary file of nominees, all of whom deserve this accolade.”

“NBC10 has been a long term partner with the Jefferson Awards, and we are very proud of this association with the good news stories that abound in our neighborhood,” said Lisa Churchville, President and General Manager of NBC10. “We are also very supportive of the important role

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United Way of RI plays in the lives of so many in our communities. It makes so much sense to bring these two outstanding organizations together to recognize volunteers and we are very pleased to share these stories with our viewers.”

All three winners received a bronze medallion at the invitation-only breakfast on April 13, and they will be recognized on NBC10. The winners’ background follows:



Lorne Adrain, a Providence-based insurance advisor, is an avid adventurer, author of inspirational books, and, for most of his life, devoted to serving others. He has touched the lives of his neighbors, friends and even strangers as a volunteer, leader and inspiring contributor to our community. He has served as chairman of the Special Olympics Rhode Island, president of URI’s Alumni Association, and serves or served on the boards of The Rhode Island Foundation, Big Picture Learning, Business Innovation Factory, Harvard Business School Alumni Board and Genesis Center. He does all of this in an inspiring, creative and caring manner, and he continues to lead the charge for the formation of new efforts to address unmet needs, and exploits opportunities for change and improvement. Mr. Adrain is the founder of National Neighborhood Day, a nationwide effort seeking to build neighborhood connections to increase civic, social and service engagement. Via his efforts with National Neighborhood Day, he has led efforts to establish collaboration with such national organizations as the Boy Scouts of America, AmeriCorps, The American Red Cross, United Way, Boys & Girls Clubs of America and United States Conference of Mayors. His next target is convincing the White House to adopt the idea. He also founded R.I. Area Coalition for Excellence, and co-founded Social Venture Partners Rhode Island and Better Providence, a new organization, which is organizing and mobilizing hundreds of people to increase transparency, responsiveness and effectiveness of city government. He is also leading an effort with R.I.-based organizations to establish a social enterprise, which offers jobs for both Rhode Islanders and poor families in Guatemala. Mr. Adrain’s philanthropy dates back to age 13 when he and a friend saved the lives of three young boys drowning in Narragansett Bay. As a high school student, he organized activities to support people with mental disabilities. In college, he volunteered as a Big Brother to a young boy. He has received numerous awards including The R.I. Foundation’s Inspiring Partner; the Leadership Rhode Island David E. Sweet Leadership Award; and Northwestern Mutual Life named him Most Exceptional Volunteer in the nation.



Steve Bruno, of Hope, R.I., willingly uses his personal story to change systems and lives, and inspire people. His overarching efforts have resulted in great strides in the area of organ donor awareness and recognition throughout New England. Steve has taken a leadership role to encourage the staffs of the American Automobile Association of R.I. and R.I.’s Dept. of Motor Vehicles to become more aware of the critical role they play in asking those renewing a license to be organ donors. When he was in his 30s, Mr. Bruno was diagnosed with a fatal kidney condition and spent two years on dialysis until he finally received a kidney through an organ donation. He never forgot this ordeal, and he took up the



call to become an advocate for organ donation in New England. As president and the primary force for the R.I. Organ Donor Awareness Coalition, he volunteers as a speaker at schools; presents at regional conferences; organizes fundraisers; and holds monthly meetings to improve the lives of those living with organ donation. If you ask individuals at the Organ Donation Awareness Coalition about Mr. Bruno, they will tell you that he has the energy of a dozen people. Mr. Bruno, a master electrician who is making a difference in the field of organ donation, has taken lemons given to him at a young age and turned them into lemonade.



Frank Forte, 62, of Warwick, who, despite coping with health issues, has yet to miss an appointment for any child he represents as a Court Appointed Special Advocate. For nearly nine years, Mr. Forte has gone the extra mile advocating for children by attending numerous meetings and making telephone calls on their behalf. This unsung hero has selflessly sat at his computer well into the night creating reports for the court. He is meticulous about his volunteer work because of an overriding need to ensure that he is expressing the health and welfare, and needs of the children correctly. Mr.

Forte keeps a positive attitude even after volunteering numerous hours per week, having had a day in court; or experiencing a difficult family visit. He receives no financial reward for his work and continues on this path unwavering all to help children become success stories. Mr. Forte once said, “People have watches; volunteers have the time.”

In 1972, Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis, U.S. Sen. Robert Taft, Jr. and Sam Beard established the Jefferson Awards. The purpose of them is to honor individuals for their achievements and contributions through public and community service, and for their ability to inspire and encourage others to get involved.

In January and February, NBC10 and United Way of Rhode Island put out a call for nominations for three local people who have gone above and beyond the call of duty for their communities. A panel of six independent judges reviewed the entries and chose the winners.

The R.I. Jefferson Award’s six judges included Bernie Beaudreau, executive director of Serve R.I.; Claudia Cardozo, small business account executive, R.I. Economic Development Corp.; Sandra J. Pattie, COO of BankNewport; and three representatives from Massachusetts-based United Ways, Dianne L. DePippo, president and CPO of United Way of Attleboro/Taunton;

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Sarah Gonet, vice president of Resource Development, United Way of Greater New Bedford;
Solight Sou, communications coordinator, United Way of Greater Fall River.

For more information visit: www.liveunitedri.org/volunteer/jefferson-awards.asp or
http://www2.turnto10.com/jar/news/jefferson_awards

About NBC 10

WJAR-TV/DT is the most watched television station in the Providence-New Bedford television market and NBC 10 News is Southern New England's leading news station. WJAR was first launched as a radio station in 1922 and then became the market's first television station in 1949. WJAR-TV/DT is owned by Media General, Inc.

About Media General

Media General is a leading provider of local news, information and entertainment over multiple media platforms. The company serves markets primarily in the Southeastern United States. Media General publishes 24 daily newspapers, including The Tampa Tribune, Richmond Times-Dispatch, and Winston-Salem Journal; and community newspapers in Virginia, North Carolina, Florida, Alabama and South Carolina; plus more than 250 weekly newspapers and other targeted publications. The company owns and operates 19 network-affiliated television stations that reach approximately 30 percent of the television households in the Southeast and nearly 9 percent of those in the United States. The company's interactive media operations include Web sites and portals that are associated with each of its newspapers and television stations as well as with many specialty publications, and two growing interactive advertising services companies, Blockdot, Inc., NetInformer and DealTaker.com.

About United Way of Rhode Island

United Way of Rhode Island has been working to improve the quality of life in Rhode Island communities for over 80 years. UWRI's mission is to mobilize the caring power of the community to improve the lives of people in need and address the issues Rhode Islanders care most about. United Way's goal is to create long-lasting changes that prevent problems from happening in the first place. We believe that all Rhode Islanders deserve the opportunity to have a better life, as when any one of us succeeds, we all succeed. At United Way, we refer to this as advancing the common good. For more information, visit www.LIVEUNITEDri.org.